



Chemehuevi Indian Tribe

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May 12, 1998

United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
Mr. Kevin P. Meyer, H-6-4, Perchlorate Steering Committee
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, California 94105-3901

Dear Mr. Meyer,

In behalf of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe I hereby submit our written comments to the Perchlorate Steering Committee.

The Chemehuevi Tribe was never formally notified by any governmental agency (Federal, State or Counties), about the discovery of Perchlorate in the Colorado River. An article in a newspaper was our source of notification.

Due to many unknown facts about Perchlorate, the Tribal Water Department "Tribal Utility" was directed to take water samples from our two domestic wells, as well as two samples from the Colorado River at North Catfish Bay and at the irrigation pumping station in the bay itself.

The test results determined that the two domestic wells showed no contamination. The two test samples taken from the river were sent to an EPA certified laboratory for analysis and confirmed the results at 6.8 ppb of Perchlorate.

In 1997, the Chemehuevi Tribe passed an Ordinance regarding the discharge of any contaminants into any river, stream or waterway within the exterior boundary of the reservation. This ordinance in effect protects the tribe's water resources and allows the tribe to challenge the responsible parties.

Our irrigation pump is situated in Catfish Bay and we presently have 100 acres under cultivation, with a remainder of 1800 acres yet to be developed. The tribe is environmentally conscious and has decided to make our farming operation totally organic. This raises a question regarding potential contamination to the crops as well as the soil through irrigation from the Colorado River.

The most immediate concern we have is the potential hazards to individuals who come in contact with contaminated water. We understand that the EPA currently

does not have a safe limit standard, but the State of California's Environmental Protection Agency does. They established a safe minimum standard of 18 ppb for an adult, 150 pounds and over. However, this raises questions regarding the harmful affects on persons under 150 pounds, such as children.

The tribe is also very much concerned about the entire eco-system from where the contamination enters the river and the affects it has on fish & wildlife. The Tribe established a Conservation Department, which has the authority and responsibility to oversee all Natural Resources on the reservation. The Chief Conservation Officer has concerns about the perchlorate contamination and the possible affects on soil along the shoreline and on fish & wildlife. The biological effects on the latter are of utmost concern because of human consumption.

The Chemehuevi Tribe owns an enterprise called "Havasus Landing Resort & Casino", which is located on the western shore of Havasu Lake. Our primary attraction is outdoor recreation, namely the Colorado River and the lake itself. Each year thousands of visitors come to the reservation to enjoy this precious resource, to either fish, hunt, swim, water ski and/or to enjoy boating. The Perchlorate contamination would more than likely keep people away, thus causing irrefutable harm to the success of our business.

We would like to be kept abreast of any future meetings regarding Perchlorate and would like to be active members of the Steering Committee, since we do have *decreed, perfected water rights*. We appreciate your cooperation thus far and look forward to seeing you in Henderson, Nevada next week.

If you have any questions or need any further clarification you may call me directly or contact Ms. Sandy Hillary or Mr. Matthew Leivas, Sr. at the Tribe's Environmental Department.

Sincerely,



Mr. Edward D. Smith
Vice Chairman

cc. Chem. Tribal Council,
Environmental Department
BIA, Parker, AZ. & Phx. Area Office
IHS
ITCA
L.J.M., Attorney
USDA, NRCS, Mr. Rick Aguayo